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I applaud Senator Claire McCaskill for taking on the difficult issue of sexual assault on college campuses and for bringing leaders together to be part of this national conversation. In Connecticut, we've also benefited from the leadership of Senator Richard Blumenthal who convened a series of roundtable discussions about this issue on college campuses throughout our state. I was pleased to join Senator Blumenthal when he announced the release of his report that resulted from those roundtable discussions: Senator Richard Blumenthal's College Sexual Assault Bill of Rights.

As Connecticut College's director of sexual violence prevention and advocacy, I am honored that Connecticut College is featured as a "Best Practices" institution in Senator Blumenthal's report. At Connecticut College, we have developed a comprehensive approach to sexual assault prevention, as well as response education and training. We call it the Think S.A.F.E. Project. Think S.A.F.E. is Connecticut College's on-campus resource for information about sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking.

Think S.A.F.E.'s mission is to partner with campus members and community agencies to foster individual and collective action to end sexual and relationship violence.

Think S.A.F.E. was launched four years ago with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women Campus Grant Program. The spirit of the grant was a good fit for our community, and the grant funding enabled Connecticut College to hire and train staff and implement effective programming on our campus. When the grant funding was completed a year ago, the College's senior administrative team agreed this work was so important and so effective that it took on the responsibility for continuing to fund this work – and my position.

This funding was critical to Connecticut College being able to begin this important work and build such a comprehensive program. I strongly encourage Congress to consider making funds available for colleges and universities to apply for grants to implement programming on their campuses.

Connecticut College's Think S.A.F.E. Project includes:

1. Education and training for students, faculty and staff – We provide training on the topics of dating/domestic violence/sexual assault and stalking to a variety of student, staff and faculty groups, including Campus Safety Officers and our student conduct board. This also includes training we provide to every incoming student during Orientation.

- 2. A Coordinated Community Response Team We bring together representatives from our campus community and from our community partnerships. Community partners include the local sexual assault and domestic violence crisis centers, police departments, state's attorney's office and the victim's advocate from the local court system. The Coordinated Community Response Team members work together to ensure a comprehensive and well-integrated approach to improving access to services.
- 3. A bystander intervention program We selected a national program called "Green Dot" for our campus community. It's based on the premise that no one has to do everything, but everyone has to do something. That "something" is your green dot. We train students, faculty and staff to recognize situations in which their peers might be in danger or at risk. When they see a situation in which someone could be at risk, they are trained to step in and prevent that one potential incident from happening. Earlier this year, we hosted a very successful "Green Dot Week" at Connecticut College, a week-long series of awareness events that culminated in a six-hour training session for 52 students. These 6-hour trainings are voluntary on behalf of the students. We have been very successful in partnering with varsity athletes in the Green Dot programming, and they are now advocates who actively work to prevent sexual assault on our campus.
- **4. Peer education** Students at Connecticut College are very involved. Along with the 500-plus students who have graduated from our voluntary Green Dot training program, students are also active in SafetyNet and 1 in 4 peer education groups that raise awareness throughout the year and especially during October and April, domestic violence activism month and sexual assault activism month, respectively.

Students at Connecticut College will tell you that the culture on our campus is very open. People are aware of this issue and they know where to go for help. This is critical to helping students feel safe on our campus.

Please keep in mind that as colleges increase education and awareness of these issues on campuses, the number of reported incidents also tends to go up. This data can be misunderstood or misinterpreted as a negative when, in fact, an increased number of reported incidents means students are aware of the resources available to them and are getting critical support from their college or university.

Again, I applaud Senator McCaskill for taking on this difficult issue. I encourage Senator McCaskill to move forward with actions that are fair and equitable and, most importantly, survivor centered. Some policies designed with the best intentions can negatively impact survivors. Mandatory reporting to law enforcement authorities, for example, could have a chilling effect on reporting; it should be up to the survivor to decide whether to pursue criminal charges.

Prosecution and conviction are not always the best action following a sexual assault. Mandatory reporting of incidents to authorities could prevent survivors from reporting and getting the help they need. And, as a deterrent, this course of action perpetuates the message that perpetrators should not commit sexual assault because they'll get in trouble for it – it's a very self-centered approach that is based on the perpetrator's well-being and happiness. Sexual assault prevention shouldn't be about

making the perpetrator happy. It should be more about developing a community of people who care about each other, who are willing to step in and help – and who can stop it from happening at all.

Accessible and approachable education is critical to preventing sexual violence. With widespread student involvement, Connecticut College is a leader in this work, and is proud to serve as a model for other colleges.